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ABSTRACT

Case studies are presented of the induction and professional development of five young teachers, specifically focusing on the impact of structural and policy changes (external workplace environment) on the ideas of young teachers in schools (internal workplace environment). The case studies investigate issues of continuity and change in teachers' ideas about teaching. Subjects are graduates of the Diploma of Teaching (Primary) at Footscray Institute of Technology (now the Victoria University of Technology) in Melbourne, Australia. The main orientation of the teachers' earliest comments is towards their work with children and their preparation of those children for their lives ahead. Consequently, references are made to providing opportunities for children to develop employment and living skills and to have successful experiences which will enhance their self-esteem. Later, it seems that the values held most strongly by the teachers have persisted in their work in the classroom and are also applied to other parts of their teaching role including administration, organizational, and policy development duties. (Contains 16 references.) (JDD)

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TEACHERS' IDEAS - CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

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TEACHERS' IDEAS - CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

A Paper Prepared for the ATEA 1994 Annual Conference

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ABSTRACT

This is part of an ongoing study looking at continuity and change in ideas about teaching which a group of young teachers express. The study is attempting to draw together the impact of structural and policy changes (external workplace environment) on the ideas of young teachers in schools (internal workplace environment).
In doing this, the study explores the induction of teachers into the workplace and their ongoing professional development.
In this paper, case studies will be presented of five of these teachers.

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TEACHERS' IDEAS - CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Setting the Scene

This study is the fourth in a series, looking at the ideas which young teachers have about teaching. The subjects in the four studies have been drawn from 1987 and 1988 graduates of the Diploma of Teaching (Primary) at Footscray Institute of Technology.*
In the initial study, the developmental stages of these teachers in their early years of teaching were investigated (Gay, Ryan and Wilson, 1992). In the second, a case study of one of the teachers was undertaken and the findings called into question the developmental stages of survival, identification and consolidation through which it has been suggested teachers pass (Fuller, 1969, 1975; Nias, 1989). This led to a reassessment of a developmental model of teachers and to a stronger emphasis on the influences which shape the development of teachers (Ryan and Gay, 1992). This study emphasised more idiosyncratic influences relating to teachers' interactions with colleagues and with the students with whom they work. The importance of influences outside of the teacher was clear in the third study in this series (Ryan and Gay, 1993). Both of these more recent studies drew attention to teachers' ideas which persist despite changing circumstances and to new ideas which appear in teachers'documentation relating to their work and their spoken comments about their work.

Drawing from the findings of these earlier studies, it was decided in this study to investigate issues of continuity and change in teachers' ideas about teaching and to consider particular influences on those ideas.

Research Background

Teachers' ideas about teaching result from contextual factors within the working environment of teachers and these ideas are mediated through the idiosyncratic ideas and experiences of individual teachers.

The active involvement of the teacher in fusing external and internal aspects of her work and ideas as a teacher is an example of the dialectical process to which Reigel (1978) (cited in Huberman, 1993) refers. Reigel (1978) argues that adult development is a dialectical process in which a person operates in a state of tension between "internal" (maturational and psychological) and "external" (cultural, social, physical) forces within an interplay of other influences. (p.19)

* more recently, Victoria University of Technology

Claxton (1989) writes of the face and base values which teachers adopt:

> "At one end of the spectrum, the stance that teachers adopt will be guided by considerations of what is least trouble, what will require least conscious uncertainty, what is most acceptable to the people whose reactions will affect their reputation or social position: in short, what makes for a quiet life." (face value)
>
> At the other end, there are considerations of principle those that constitute people's deeper philosophies about how it is right to be: how, at their best, they would like to be, both as teachers and as human beings." (base value) (p.99)

Clearly, in the work being undertaken using teachers' stories and biographies, journals and the like it is important that teachers' ideas and the context in which they work are both investigated and more importantly that the influences of one on the other is considered. The ways in which a satisfying and productive teaching role is negotiated and the flexible treatment of an ideas base for that role is characterised by patterns of change and continuity from beginning teaching throughout career.

Roles Teachers Play

There is a body of literature which considers the differences between "the teacher as person" and "the teacher in the role of teacher". Stark (1991) comments that a role can alienate people from their own authentic possibility of being and draws on the contention of Greene (1967) that

> "Because teachers are living beings they suffer objectification like other members of society: thrust into molds. They play roles in many ways, defined by others, although their interpretations of these roles must in some manner be grounded in an understanding of themselves." (Stark, 1991, p. 294)

Sadly, Stark (1991) quotes a beginning teacher saying,

> "As I become less genuine as an individual, I become more successful as a "teacher in the system"" (p.311)

Nias (1989) study of primary teachers' work highlights teachers' sense of self which is central to their personal and professional identity. Teachers are socialised into a tradition in which high value is attached to self investment and to the establishment of a personal relationship with pupils. Their self image is more

important to them as practitioners than is the case of occupations where the person can be separated from the craft. From a symbolic interactionist perspective the self is seen as simultaneously socially constructed and autonomous.

Teachers' Relationships with Students

The relationships which teachers develop with the students they teach and with their colleagues have been noted by several researchers as clear influences on teachers' ideas about teaching and their satisfaction with it. Huberman (1993) indicated that for teachers in his study "easy beginnings" in teaching were consonant with "good rapport with pupils" (p.244). Huberman reiterates the importance of relationships with students in shaping teachers' work and ideas in that he suggests that relationships with students are at the heart of most teacher motivation.

For Kottkamp (1990) the centre of the work universe for most teachers is the classroom.

Teachers' Relationships with Colleagues:

Although Raymond et al (1992) did not solicit information about relationships with colleagues in their collection of eighty teachers' life stories, 98% of teachers wrote about intercollegial relations: 80% mentioned negative interactions with colleagues as significant and 60% perceived positive interactions with peers as special aspects of their work.

Persistance and Change in Teachers' Ideas about Teaching:

Raymond, Butt and Townsend (1992) present three accounts of teacher development which emphasise the importance of pre-teaching experiences. This pattern has been apparent in early studies in the present project where the rationale for the establishment of a teacher education program in the western suburbs of Melbourne has been described along with its acknowledgement of equity and access issues exemplified in Government policy during the mid eighties and its selection of students "from the west to teach in the west" (Gay, Wilson and Ryan, 1992; Ryan and Gay, 1993).

Raymond et al (1992) write that from a preliminary analysis of the eighty teacher autobiographies they have collected that they can discern a range of influences of parents, relatives, school teachers, the nature of home, ethnicity, religion and location and that these are continually evoked and reconstructed to establish a firm emotional and moral ground that helps form teachers' professional commitment and identity. In suggesting that informal and formal professional activities all seem to be assessed against

this personal ground Raymond et al (1992) are providing an explanation of the function of the base and face values to which Claxton (1989) refers.

Teacher development draws on both face and base values and on teacher's relationships with students and with colleagues but the impact of such influences is less additive and more interactive. Lortie (1973) concluded from a review of teacher socialization that there are lively alternative explanations of the socialization process which is "undoubtedly a complex process not readily captured by a simple, one factor frame of reference".

Although a variety of factors at the classroom, school and community levels have been shown to be related to the development of teaching perspectives, teachers have not been viewed as active participants in determining the course of their socialization.

An example of the position of teacher socialization as an interactive process is the conceptual model of Lacey (1977) which is based on the constant interplay between choices and constraint in the process of learning to teach. Lacey proposes the construct of "social strategy" as a device for understanding the varying degrees to which teachers conform to institutional processes and reconstitute the institutional conditions in which they work.

From an examination of research literature on teacher socialization, Zeichner (1986) presented evidence for the interactive nature of teacher socialization. Zeichner concluded that the socialization of teachers entails "more than a simple expression of ideas, characteristics and capabilities that teachers bring to the workplace. The strength and direction of teacher development is clearly influenced to varying degrees by the purposes and intentions of individual teachers who do not simply acquiesce to the forces around them."

Gerke (1981) investigated the ways in which beginning teachers adapted to the teacher role to meet their own needs, while at the same time being socialised into the role demanded of them. The beginning teachers sought ties with "reference groups" consisting of students, colleagues or supervisors who provided optimum security during their role induction. However, as individuals sense of teacher competence and self esteem increased, the group focus of the individuals changed to less supportive and higher risk groups.

From a study of staff relationships in primary schools, Nias et al (1989) concluded that the contemporary school is embedded in a changing social and adminstrative context which places increasing demands upon it. Schools as organizations were described as densely populated, actively constructed, finely balanced and continuously

changing. At the same time, they were stable, subject to the authority of the principal and the influence of peers controlled by allegiance to shared beliefs and values. The key to this apparent contradiction is the notion of "organizational culture" the components of which are actively constructed by members of that culture, that is teachers.

Description of the Study

Empirical methods of inquiry are less appropriate for this type of study because the emphasis is on feeling, motivation, cognition and perceptions of the teachers. The aim is to use as windows on to teachers' ideas about teaching the written and spoken materials prepared by teachers. The next step proposed in this ongoing research project is to observe the work of the teachers in their classrooms, to consider the transition into practice of the ideas expressed and recorded.
For this study, five teachers who commenced teaching in 1989, after having completed the Diploma of Teaching (Primary) in 1988 were invited to provide copies of all the courses, work programs, applications for promotion and the like which they had developed in the period, 1989-1994. In addition to this material, the researchers drew on responses which these teachers gave in interviews in 1993 about their ideas about teaching. For several of the teachers, a 1988 videotape was available in which these teachers explained their ideas about teaching.
The five teachers are graduates of the second intake in 1986 of the Diploma of Teaching (Primary) program at Footscray Institute of technology (now Victoria University of Technology). The teachers were selected as representative of the students coming into the program at Footscray in 1986. Three were from non-English speaking backgrounds and all completed their schooling in western suburban government schools. They all continue to live in inner or western suburban areas of Melbourne and teach in schools in the northern or western suburbs of Melbourne.

In reviewing the videotaped and written materials, the researchers sought to determine consistent themes and also the points at which new ideas were first raised.
Furthermore, in studying consistent themes, the researchers looked for evidence of extension and elaboration of ideas.
This paper represents only a preliminary analysis of the data.

Findings of the Study

This section of the report comprises a summary of ideas drawn from videotapes made by the researchers of some of the teachers expressing their ideas about teaching recorded as they completed the Diploma of Teaching (Primary) in 1988 and written documentation provided by the teachers in May 1994.

Main themes were drawn from transcripts of the 1988 videotapes, as available, and from the written material. The material drawn from these sources was divided into consistent, extended and new.

The tables below include a summary of this material for the years it was available.
INSERT TABLE 1

Paul: Continuity. Consistency of ideas about working with children, cooperative learning, experiential learning, concern for a broad curriculum, providing a range of experiences and success opportunities for children.

Change. Greatest change in the image of Paul within the school setting; his greater involvement in committees and generally as a member of the school team.

Examples:
"I think important skills are problem solving skills, decision making skills, communication and analysis skills" (1988)

To provide a curriculum that incorporates a wide range of experiences for children, builds on their interests and experiences, allows children to be actively involved, cooperative learning, problem solving, group work. (1994)

During my stay at ____ Primary School I have developed a good rapport with students, parents and staff. I have worked with the school community (and liaised with parents) in a number of areas including school council, fundraising, prpe. transition, school promotions, clubs program, social events as well as involving parents in my classroom program. Working in a small school, it is crucial to develop positive relationships with other staff members as you need to band together as a team and set a harmonious tone within the school. My willingness to liaise with the school community enables effective daily communication as well as professional and friendly relationships to develop. (1994)

INSERT TABLE 2

Samantha: Continuity. Samantha's sense of community and comradeship are consistent throughout. Her respect for the individual differences of her students and for collegial working relationships with staff is clear.

Change. A policy orientation develops early in Samantha's career and draws on her particular interests in working with parents. Her written materials include considerable information about parent and homework policies.
Performing arts is a vehicle for self-development and for children's learning and is another consistent theme drawing on Samantha's own expressed interest in the area. There is strong evidence throughout Samantha's documents of her teaching role being very much an extension of her life interests and values.

Examples:

I feel parents have every right to be part of the school curriculum, they are members of the school community. (1988)
We believe that the quality of education is enhanced for children when their parents are involved in the life of the school. It is the objective of this program to promote positive relationships between all groups and individuals in the school community. (1992)

I live and have been educated in the Broadmeadows area and therefore have a vested interest in the local community. I have always wanted to work in this area. I understand many of the problems people in the area have and also the "stigma" of living in Broadmeadows. I feel I have good rapport with the children, parents and staff. Coming from a strong religious background which I expect people to respect, I feel I show consideration for others' beliefs. (1994)

INSERT TABLE 3

Susan: Continuity. The consistent focus of Susan's documentation is detailed planning for each curriculum are and assessment of each student's progress. Initial planning described daily activities and skills, but developed into broader scope and sequences in curriculum framework areas. Her knowledge of curriculum was extended through many inservice activities.

Change. Recent changes in Susan's career aspirations are indicated through membership of the Administrative Committee, School Council, Curriculum Committees, which culminated in her promotion. To quote: "In going for promotion, I feel I am ready for more responsibility. Career is so important, so I will go as far as I can" (1992). Parents however, appear a source of exasperation which Susan described as "I feel the job would be much easier if we didn't have to deal with parents." (1993)

Examples: My main ideas are to teach what the policies and guidelines say I must teach, but in the most interesting and enjoyable way possible. (1993)

INSERT TABLE 4

Josie: Continuity. The consistent theme throughout Josie's documentation is the attention she pays to children's cooperative learning. This is emphasised at various stages of her career. Similarly, assessment, which Josie referred to in her videptape presentation in 1988 has remained an important part of Josie's ideas about teaching.

Change. Josie's involvement with assessment practices and policies was formalised in her membership of the schools' Assessment Policy Committee in 1992 and her continuing involvement with that committee.

Examples: Assessment should be ongoing and teachers should take into account how children go about solving problems. (1988)

Assessment of children should be a regular and ongoing process. Assessment should include a variety of different strategies including individual anecdotal records, checklists, observations, questioning, discussions, collection of work samples, testing and teacher and children's self-evaluation. (1992)

Regular evaluation of programs and assessment of children is integral to effective, planning , teaching and learning. This task is not only the responsibility of an individual but also of the team. I have demonstrated my personal commitment to maintaining and sharing consistent and comphrensive assessment and evaluation records for all children and curriculum programs within my classroom. (1994)

I will provide an opportunity for children to work with others, to ask questions, form opinions etc. because interaction is crucial to learning. (1988)

Cooperative learning constantly takes place in my grade as the children are continuously encouraged to be actively engaged in learning from and interacting with each other. (1992)

It brings tears to my eyes when I see my children working together so beautifully and cooperatively with one another. (1993)

INSERT TABLE 5

Leon: Continuity. There are diverse themes expressed in Leon's extensive documentation of his work that focusses on the school, teaching, students and parents.

Examples: "Through my experiences in curriculum development, the committee structure, inservices, administration and studying, I am always up to date with current teaching and ministerial trends". (1992)

"I encourage in students the responsibility for their own learning, building on past understandings. I cater for individual differences, encouraging risk taking and active participation. I provide an comprehensive and integrated curriculum employing a process approach to learning". (1994)

Changes. Changes in Leon's focus are in taking a more leading role in instigating change in the school, through leadership of curriculum committees, inservices and school activities.

A noteable example is: "I have instigated moderation sessions therefore expanding whole staff knowledge on (English profiles). I was leader of the committee responsible for the development of cummulative files, where staff were responsible for keeping student records and work samples on a regular basis." (1994)

An example of commitment to school needs and priorities is: "As a member of the Steering and Administrative committee, I have assured that school priorities have been identified and made clear to parents, staff and students." (1994)

On parents: "I have organised parent information sessions, reporting days, as well as surveys in response to those reporting days." (1994)

Examples of relationships with students are: "I am involved in the Care Program and feel it allows myself to become more aware of individual student's needs. I am further involved in student relationships within 'Breakfast Club' and sick bay duties. I have encouraged children to express their thoughts and feelings freely at class meetings and at Junior School Council."

Concluding Comments

The main orientation of these teachers' earliest comments is towards their work with children and their preparation of those children for their lives ahead. Consequently, references are made to providing opportunities for children to develop employment and living skills and to have successful experiences which will enhance their self-esteem.

Once the teachers move into schools, it seems that the values held most strongly by these teachers have persisted in the ideas they continue to express about teaching. These patterns prevail but increasingly for these teachers they are only part of a teaching role which includes considerably more administration, organizational and policy development duties. Frequently, though, the original ideas which these teachers expressed have not only persisted in the work of the teachers in their own classrooms but have also informed the policy development and administrative duties they have pursued.

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TABLE 1: KEY THEMES AND DEVELOPMENTS - PAUL

1988	1989	1990	1993	1994
Individual children...	.....			
Problem Solving Skills....	.....	.....	.....	..... cooperative learning
Communication skills.....	.....			
Future/ Change				
				Evaluation of teaching
Broad curriculum.	.....	.....	.....	comprehensive curriculum
Real Life Experiences	.....	.....	.....	.....
		Ongoing assessment records.....	.....	.....
			Extensive committee membership..	..... .
				Role Model
				Discipline
				Support for school policies
				School team
				Parents

TABLE 4: KEY THEMES AND DEVELOPMENTS - JOSIE

1988	1992	1993	1994
Problem Solving			
Change.....	.....	.....	
Concrete Materials			
Cooperative learning.....	.....	.....	
Integrated curriculum	Comprehensive curriculum....	.....	.....
Learner-Centered			
Enjoyment/Fun			
Ongoing assessment....	..... working party	.....	.....
Risk Taking....	.....		
	Administration/ organization...	.....	.....
	Discipline		
	School Team.....	.....	.....
	Professional reading		
	Parents		
	Policies.....	.....	.....

TABLE 2: KEY THEMES AND DEVELOPMENTS - SAMANTHA

1988	1989	1991	1992	1993	1994
Parents..	Homework.	.....	.....	.....	.....
Skills					
Encouragement					
Enthusiasm	.....				
Performing Arts	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Change					
Respect for individual differences.....	.....	.....	.....	Maximum Participation..	.....
	Good working relationship...	.....	Teams....	Diplomacy in working with colleagues.....	Teams
					Policies
	Assessment				
			Budgets		
				Discipline	
					Professional development

TABLE 3: KEY THEMES AND DEVELOPMENTS - SUSAN

1989	1992	1993
Themes.....	.....	
Planning	.....	Curriculum scope and sequence
Activities	.....	Learning an Active Process
Assessment.....	.....	
		Groups
		Career
		Parents

TABLE 5: KEY THEMES AND DEVELOPMENTS - LEON

1991	1994
School: Participate in Policy, Planning	.Curriculum initiatives .Contribute to activities
Staff: .Share Ideas..... .Communicate	.Administrative Committee .Instigate Inservices
Teaching: .Themes, Integrated curriculum .Resources .Range of experiences .Extend, enrich	.Effective classroom practice .Co-operative learning .Enquiry, process approaches .Cross-age tutoring
Students: .Special Needs .Self Esteem .Abilities, Interests, Background	.Individual needs .Care Program
Parents: .Involvement .Support	.Organise Parent Information .Reporting .Survey Parents
Assessment: .Student Progress .Reporting	.Implement Profiles .Tender Assessment, Reporting Committee
Equal Opportunity	Access for Girls
Multicultural Education	.Develop ESL Program .Personal Development
	Professional Development: .School Administration .Draft Constitution